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CUBA

7 January 1959

- I. Castro's hand-picked provisional president, Manuel Urrutia, has dissolved Congress and criminal courts and announced that his govt will rule by decree until national elections in 18-24 months.
 - A. 32-year-old Fidel Castro is most influential figure in govt-- will probably be named to head armed forces.
 1. He is a national hero--his two-year war against Batista has captured imagination of Cuban masses and loyalty and respect of numerous responsible figures including Jose Bosch, president of Bacardi Rum Company.
 2. Comes from wealthy family; owns large sugar plantation; obtained degree from Havana Law School where he was active agitator and arrested several times.
 3. Is a born fighter; speeches and private talks emphasize his idealism. Appears politically naive.
 - B. Urrutia is 58-year-old former judge who gained fame by acquitting a number of youths charged with rebel activity against Batista.
 1. Middle class background, is strongly anti-Commie.
 2. Believed honest and sincere. Is mild-mannered, lacks personal political following; presumably chosen by Castro in belief he could be easily controlled.
 - C. Urrutia's cabinet contains moderate, responsible elements, but also some unknowns. Well knowns include:
 1. Prime Minister Jose Miro Cardona is very highly regarded former president of Havana Bar Ass'n just returned from exile.

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2. Foreign Minister Roberto Agramonte is leading political and intellectual figure; pro-US and strongly anti-Communist.
- II. Thus far, only a few indications as to new govt's policies. New regime is a product of a truly popular revolution participated in by lower classes and may have implications on Cuba's social order.
- A. Castro has often asserted his desire for friendship with US.
 1. However, strong bitterness developed among some rebels who convinced US assistance prolonged Batista's regime.
Stopped in March [B. Minister stopping Castro from his job]
 - B. Castro's 1955 pledges to nationalize foreign investments and public utilities have not been repeated.
 - C. Castro has called for land reform, but program vague and issued in heat of battle. He is big landowner.
 - D. Main content of rebel speeches is strong emotional stand for democracy.
 - E. Cuba likely to become an aggressive champion of democracy in hemisphere.
- III. Commies, actively trying to exploit situation, have surfaced.
- A. Popular Socialist (Commie) Party (PSP), outlawed in 1953, has strongly supported rebel movement in public statements.
 1. Its numerous attempts to join rebels in united front apparently rebuffed.
 2. Commies have now obtained minority voice in labor movement.
 3. Commies believed to have infiltrated some rebel units at low level.
 4. Anti-US sentiments of some rebel leaders may be exploited by Commies.
 - B. In current fervor for democracy, PSP may be re-legalized.
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 1. However, strong anti-Commie convictions of Urrutia and some other members of new govt may counter-balance.